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Gerald E. Lavey, April 12, 2005 -

This is the premier edition of Focus FAA — a new publication for and about employees.

Why a new publication?

You told us in the Employee Attitude Survey and later in a nationwide evaluation of our internal communications processes that you want to hear more about you and your colleagues around the FAA, not just about us at headquarters. You also asked us to streamline the flow of information because there are so many publications, sometimes each telling a different story, that it can become confusing.

One of the things we want to avoid is to call this an employee publication, then turn around and fill it with inside-the-Beltway stories about FAA executives. In fact, the Administrator told us that if this publication features photos and stories about her and other Washington executives, it would go downhill fast. But, Focus FAA can become a true employee publication only if you help make it so. There are great stories out there of employees living the values that the agency espouses (see <http://www.faa.gov/about/mission/>). Everybody has a story. So do you. And we'd like to hear it.

So what makes a story newsworthy?

We're looking for unusual milestones and achievements; employees overcoming hardship or providing service to others; a new perspective on an old topic; a strong opinion; and examples of living the FAA's values and expressing the FAA's mission in your work and life. Photos will be a prominent feature of this publication, so when you think stories, think photos too.

[Click here to submit your stories or story ideas.](#)



Gerald E. Lavey



“Everybody has a story. So do you.”

— Gerald Lavey

Focus FAA is just one of the new products we are launching today. The others include FAA TODAY, which will include system performance metrics and news updates that cut across the entire agency. We also have established FAA by Phone, a toll-free call-in line (800-FAA-NEWS) where every Tuesday you can get 2-minute updates of the most significant happenings of the week.

Finally, in an effort to create a standard agency brand that is recognized and appreciated as a representation of the great work the FAA does daily, we are issuing standards for the design and use of the FAA logo and other agency insignia.

Why spend precious resources on this when the agency is hurting for funds?

- 1.) As a web-based publication, Focus FAA will avoid the high costs associated with printing and distribution, although facility managers can print out a black-and-white PDF version for those without access to Internet.
- 2.) Once Focus FAA is up and running, we will reduce the number of publications that caused your confusion in the first place.
- 3.) In time, streamlining publications, eliminating duplication, and consolidating resources will actually save money.

For the first few months, we all will be feeling our way and looking to you to help keep us headed in the right direction. OPINION is one of the three major categories of Focus FAA, and we're hoping you will regularly give us the benefit of your opinions. That's the only way we'll get this thing right. ➔

Focus FAA is published electronically every two weeks on payday by the Office of Communications.

For more information, contact Editor Jim Tise at Tel: (202) 267-3443, or E-mail: jim.tise@faa.gov.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AOA HIGHLIGHTS — A NEW BEGINNING:

Highlights will be a regular column in the new Focus FAA biweekly publication rolled out today along with two other communications vehicles.

ADMINISTRATOR CONGRATULATES NY CENTER:

New York Air Route Traffic Controller Center successfully completes first operational test of ATOP, new automation system for oceanic area. Blakey calls it “huge first step.”

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE:

Nancy Graham is FAA’s new Director of the FAA Asia/Pacific Office in Singapore. Nancy Kalinowski named Director of the ATO’s System Operations and Safety.

UPDATED OPERATIONAL EVOLUTION PLAN NOW POSTED:

Version 7 of the Operational Evolution Plan (OEP) is now posted on the FAA website at <http://www.faa.gov/programs/oep>

FINALLY, A SEARCH ENGINE THAT WORKS:

If you haven’t tried the Google search engine on the FAA public website, do yourself a favor. It really searches and finds. Imagine that.

LEARNING TO EAT CROW AND LIKE IT:

The spoof in the April 1 AOA Highlights wasn’t funny to many and it was ill advised in today’s uncertain climate. My apologies – it was a bad call.

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK:

Re article on micro-management, Garrison Russell quotes Robert E. Lee on same from “outstanding” book *Robert E. Lee on Leadership*, by H.W. Crocker III.

THE LAST WORD:

Caveat Emptor: “Sin City” is way over the top in terms of violence, says James Whitlow. Vice President Cheney pokes fun at himself in the Radio & Television Correspondents Association dinner was held this week in Washington.

Gerald E. Lavey

Deputy Assistant

Administrator for Internal

Communications

Office of Public Affairs

Notes: 9-AWA-AOA-

VOICE

Check the new FAA

employee home page

<http://employees.faa.gov>

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

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AOA HIGHLIGHTS — A NEW BEGINNING:

AOA Highlights will be one of the regular features of *Focus FAA*, the new biweekly publication you are reading. As before, we'll try to give you a perspective from a front-row seat on the 10th floor of the FAA headquarters building. We'll not only tell you what's happening but what it means, at least as we see it. So often, just the bare facts aren't nearly enough. Having said that, we're the first to acknowledge that the view from the 10th floor of this building is wonderful but the perspective on the agency as a whole is murky at best. We need your viewpoint to fill out the picture. You've never hesitated to tell this writer in the past when he was all wet, so don't stop now. The opinion section of *Focus FAA* is designed precisely for that purpose. Please use it.

ADMINISTRATOR CONGRATULATES NEW YORK CENTER:

A week or so ago, the New York Air Route Traffic Control Center successfully completed the first operational test of the Advanced Technologies and Oceanic Procedures (ATOP) program. (See related story under "News".)

As the Administrator said in a note to the facility, "even though full operational use at the New York center is not scheduled until May, and even later at Oakland and Anchorage, this is a huge first step, and I want to thank all who made it possible."

While nobody wants to jinx the program by making too much of this first operational test, this really is big deal. It's a big deal in the sense, as the Administrator's note mentioned, "ATOP represents the most significant upgrade in oceanic airspace management ever and a key to meeting the projected needs of international aviation. When fully implemented, ATOP will modernize facilities responsible for managing about 80 percent of the world's controlled airspace."

ATOP fully integrates flight and radar data processing, detects conflicts between aircraft, provides data link and surveillance capabilities, and automates the manual processes used today. ATOP sets the stage for reducing aircraft separation from 100 nautical miles to 30 nautical miles. I took this description verbatim from the FAA website. If

you want to know more, please go to the site at <http://www.faa.gov/aua/oceanicatc/index.cfm?content=atop>.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE: Nancy Graham, FAA's International Technical Program Manager, based in Brussels, Belgium, for the last few years has been selected as Director of the FAA Asia/Pacific Office in Singapore. She replaces Beth Erickson, who retired in March. Before assigned to Brussels, Graham served in FAA Washington headquarters as the Integrated Product Team Leader for FAA's International Oceanic and Offshore Programs and as the Communications, Navigation and Surveillance Co-Chair for the International Civil Aviation Organization's Informal Pacific/Asia Working Group. The focus of this responsibility was satellite based communication, navigation, and surveillance in oceanic airspace.

Nancy Kalinowski has been appointed Director of the ATO's System Operations and Safety. When the Air Traffic Organization was created in February 2004, Kalinowski

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was appointed Director of Flight Services Communications. Most recently she became Director of Internal Communications for the ATO. Previous executive positions included Deputy Director of Air Traffic Program Management and Deputy Program Director for Air Traffic Airspace Management. There, she provided executive direction for FAA's rulemaking and National Airspace Redesign. She began her FAA career in 1976.

UPDATED OPERATIONAL EVOLUTION PLAN NOW POSTED:

The latest update (Version 7) to the Operational Evolution Plan (OEP) is now posted on the FAA website at <http://www.faa.gov/programs/oep>.

What's an OEP and why should you care? It's basically a rolling plan to increase the capacity of the National Airspace System by as much as 30 percent over the next ten years. If you think of Flight Plan 2005-2009 as the near-term strategic plan, if you will, and the Joint Planning Development Office (JPDO) plan as the long-term strategic plan (out to the year 2025), then think of the OEP as somewhere in the

midterm. The OEP is more tactical than strategic, with a focus on relieving pressure at chronically congested airports through new runways, procedures, technologies, and airspace redesign projects. In other words, it's very specific — very project oriented, keyed to available resources and therefore subject to change as circumstances, such as budgets, change. But, however you think of these three plans, don't think of them as wholly separate and apart. They are all part of a piece. That's why ATO, for example, has one person — Charlie Keegan — in charge of coordinating all three plans for the ATO.

FINALLY, A SEARCH ENGINE THAT WORKS:

We want to draw your attention to the Google search engine that is now available on the FAA public website. It used to be when you went to the FAA website that your chances of searching and finding what you were looking for ranged from slim to nil. Now, with the Google search engine, it's almost certain you will find what you are looking for. At least that has been my experience. If your previous experience was like ours, give the site another

chance. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised. All the credit goes to OST, which purchased the Google search engine for the whole department, and Phyllis Preston and crew who implemented it on our website. Eventually, the internal site will have it as well. Stay tuned.

LEARNING TO EAT CROW AND LIKE IT:

While some of you liked the April Fool's Day spoof we put in AOA Highlights on April 1 "Stranger than Fiction," others did not find it so funny. In fact, some of you took great umbrage. At a minimum, we should have put the disclaimer at the end of the spoof instead of saving it for "The Last Word." And, on further reflection, we probably shouldn't have used it at all. In this current atmosphere, humor about budgets and reorganizations is risky and probably should be avoided at all cost. I thought it was so off the wall and everyone would spot it straight away, but, alas, some clearly did not. It was a bad call on my part. My apologies for causing you sweaty palms and raising your heart rates. Now, if you will excuse me, I must go eat crow. I've

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learned to like it over the years. In this job, it's standard fare.

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK:

In response to the recent article from the *Wall Street Journal* on micromanagement, excerpts of which we included in last week's *AOA Highlights*, this from Garrison Russell: "I am now reading an outstanding book on leadership called Robert E. Lee on Leadership by H.W. Crocker III. The book reveals his character and battle strategies and applies them to business management of a modern corporation. Regarding micromanagement he [Crocker] writes:

"Lee knew that megalomania, egotism, executive interference, and micromanagement are horrible impediments to effective leadership — that they cause more problems than they could ever possibly cure, that they demoralize subordinates and make them timid, and that they are based on the terrible fallacy that one central authority, with inevitably imperfect knowledge, should overrule officers in the field who are better acquainted with the actual detail of the battle. Lee's leadership style is the combat cor-

ollary of Friedrich von Hayek's classic defense of the free market in his famous book *The Road to Serfdom*, which shows that command economies — whether fascist, communist, or socialist — are in every way inferior to free-market economies where decision making is delegated down to countless individuals freely responding to a wealth of diverse economic information and demands."

People matter, individuals matter; no system, however well-oiled, and no leader, however omniscient, can afford to ignore the importance of personnel."

THE LAST WORD:

James Whitlow, a regular moviegoer who is no shrinking violet, says that "Sin City" is way over the top in terms of violence. It's well made, he said, but people reading the reviews might not get a sense of how violent that movie really is. He thinks a lot of people who go to the movie based solely on reviews — at least the ones he has seen — might be severely disappointed at a minimum.

Finally, the Radio & Television Correspondents Association dinner was held last week in Washington. This is an annual event at which the politicians and the news media types roast each other and themselves. Vice President Cheney substituted for the President who was in Rome.

Cheney, who has suffered four heart attacks, described a recent experience in which he felt a strange sensation in his chest. He said he got short of breath and started shaking uncontrollably all over. He turned to his wife Lynn and told her something strange was happening to him and he didn't know what it was. His wife turned to him and said, "Dick, it's called laughing."

You keep laughing, too. Life is way too important to be taken all that seriously. Thanks for tuning in. We'll see you back here in two weeks. ➔

Deviations

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..Controller training starts at home..

"Son #3 you are approved for push back from the garage,
taxi down driveway to street

...after checking both ways you are cleared for departure...

maintain heading of 014 degrees speed

at 25mph to Maple and Main via 3rd

Street as filed...once en route

contact control at 202.493.XXXX

..uh that's your mom's cell
phone..and give your
status... stay out of
turbulence.

Have a good day.."



ATOP is Tops

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The Advanced Technologies and Oceanic Procedures (ATOP) system began initial operating capability at the end of March, a major step in extending the United States' safety expertise beyond its borders.

"Once again, the United States is leading the way," said Aaron Wilkins, who's been working on the project for six years. Wilkins, program support lead on the project, spoke about the benefits of ATOP, which uses integrated flight data and radar processors and text messaging to control traffic over the oceans.

"Controllers no longer will have to use

paper strips to track traffic," he said. "Now it will be all automated. It will include a conflict probe that tells you if there are two aircraft too close together."

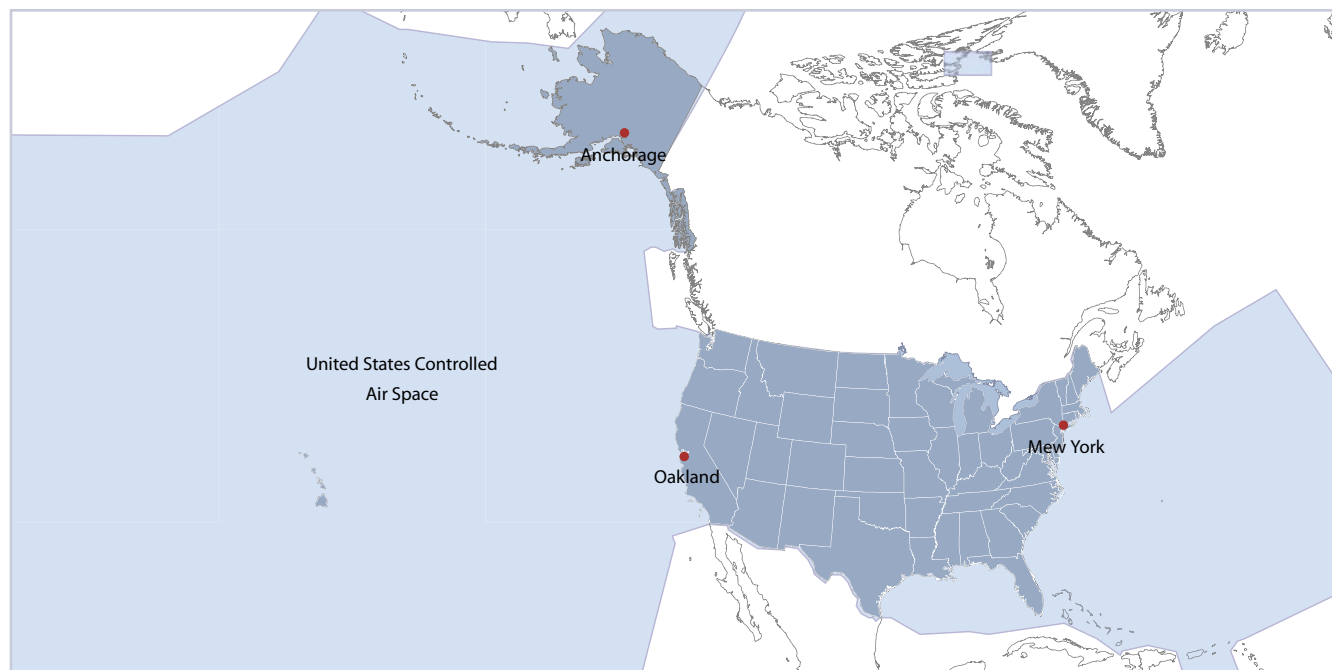
The distances involved tell the story. Planes flying over the South Pacific now will be separated by 30 nautical miles in longitude and 30 miles latitude, compared to 50 nautical miles before. Eventually, planes flying over the Atlantic Ocean will have their minimum separations decreased to 30 miles, too.

Another benefit, said Wilkins, is datalink communications that sends text messages to pilots. This helps alleviate problems

that pilots and controllers sometimes have with static over voice channels.

ATOP comes at a propitious time for the agency. One of its Flight Plan goals — reducing the number of en route change requests over the oceans — slipped into the "red" unsatisfactory level recently. An FAA official said ATOP will help reduce that number and might allow achieving the performance target by year's end.

"When you stay on a project this long, it's good to see the fruits of your labor," said Wilkins. "When you walk into a facility, you can see you made a difference." ➔



The light gray areas of the map show the oceanic air space controlled by the United States.

The Solco Brothers may disagree

from time to time, but they are one tight-knit band of brothers. Donald, Reggie and Kelvin Solco are veteran FAA employees. Donald, 49, is a radar technician out of El Paso; Reggie, 45, is a radar/communications/automation technician out of Port Arthur, Texas; and Kelvin, 43, is airports manager for the Southwest Region.

When asked a typically divisive question — “Who’s better looking?” — they reach agreement, more or less. “If you asked my mother, it’s probably Reggie,” says Donald. “If you ask the ladies, it’s probably Reggie,” Kelvin chimes in. Reggie remains diplomatically silent.

That tight family bond was forged during their youth as Army brats, when the Solcos traveled around the country and the world with their mother and father, who was a member of the Army Signal Corps. “Being a small family and traveling a lot kept us close,” said Reggie. That could mean covering each



The Solco brothers in Bangkok, Thailand, circa 1965. That's Kelvin (left) and Reggie flanking Donald.

Band of Brothers

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Donald Solco



Kevin Solco



Reggie Solco

others' backs sometimes. "Being the oldest, they've always been my little brothers," said Donald. "I've got to take care of them. My mother and father wouldn't have it any other way."

There's an interesting symmetry to their lives. Reggie and Donald were born in Atlanta but live in Texas. Kelvin was born in Texas and was living in Atlanta until his recent promotion to Southwest Region airports manager. Reggie trained as a technician in the Air National Guard and Donald got his training in the Army. Their father worked in both services, as well. Kelvin went to college to study electronics and then got an MBA. Kelvin thinks his dad's "electronics gene and technician's gene must have prevailed" in his sons.

It was Kelvin, the youngest, who paved the way for his older brothers' entry into the agency. He joined the FAA 24 years ago, working his way up to become the new Airports Division manager for the Southwest Region. Donald joined in 1987, and Reggie in 1995.

The brothers enjoy talking shop with each other. Reggie appreciates Kelvin's insight into the agency's culture. "I like to be able to see the big picture. To get a panoramic view of things."

As a management representative, Kelvin admits to having "some pretty interesting discussions" about union issues with his brothers. But not even a potentially hot button issue like union/management relations can drive them apart.

That's how brothers are. ➔

During this final open season, FERS employees will be able to contribute up to 15 percent of basic pay; CSRS employees will be able to contribute up to 10 percent of their basic pay. The IRS, however, forbids contributions of more than \$14,000 in any year.

GROSS													
7380.87	FICA-WGE	26679.52	FICA-TAX	1654.12	MED-WGE	26679.52	MED-TAX	386.84	RETIREMENT	219.06	FED-W2	2366	
FED-TAX	4254.04	STAX-WGE (MD)	23667.62	STAX-DED (MD)	1684.67	GHI	351.35	TSP-GOV-AMT	1369.04	TSPTAX-DEFAMT	3011.90	YTD-HB-DE	35
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Controller Hiring Under Way

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Academy has first class since 1993. The FAA has begun hiring air traffic controllers in numbers projected to offset the loss of thousands who are expected to retire over the next decade.

According to the 10-year Air Traffic Control Workforce Plan, which the agency sent to Congress in December, the FAA will hire 435 new controllers this fiscal year and 1,249 controllers next fiscal year. Sixty of these positions will fill terminal slots and the remaining 375 will move into en route positions.

Hiring is well under way, with many students reporting for duty and beginning their training. The agency is improving its training techniques, including the better use of high-fidelity simulators that enable students to practice working the actual airspace to which they will be assigned.

The first en route class with 16 students began at the FAA Academy on April 7. Additional en route classes will follow at 10-day intervals through the end of September. Most of the new hires will be graduates of the FAA's Collegiate Training Initiative program that involves a network of colleges across the country, while others will come from military programs. "For the first time in 12 years the classrooms and labs at the academy will be constantly full of initial qualification students," said Ned Reese, manager of the FAA Academy's Air Traffic Division. "With the new multi-path training program in



place, complimented by new high-fidelity tower and en route labs, the FAA will soon begin to receive increasing numbers of highly trained students ready to enter on-the-job training. The future looks great!"

Over the next 10 years, it is estimated that 73 percent of the agency's nearly 15,000 controllers will become eligible to retire. The development has been in the

making for two decades as the 11,000 controllers hired after the strike in 1981 become eligible to retire. FAA officials estimate that total controller attrition over the next 10 years could be as high as 11,000. To meet this challenge, the FAA developed the workforce plan and presented it to Congress.

The plan also outlined cost-saving mechanisms that will reduce previous staffing projections by 10 percent over the next five years. ➔



"...the FAA will soon begin to receive increasing numbers of highly trained students ready to enter on-the-job training."

Customers Rave, Registry Rules



Margaret Worthan is a legal instruments examiner for the Civil Aviation Registry. Her main duty is to review airmen applications to ensure that they have met all regulatory requirements for the certification for which they are applying.

Above right is the front of the FAA's popular new pilot's license.



Pilots, mechanics and other airmen have enthusiastically endorsed the improved service and increased efficiency of FAA's automated Civil Aviation Registry.

The automated system issued nearly 64,000 replacement certificates in the first half of this fiscal year. That's about 2 1/2 times the number it did just a few years ago.

Mark Lash, the registry manager, and his staff saw that automation was a key to keeping up with increasing demand for the registry's services and products, and improving customer service. Now pilots and mechanics can apply for and receive a replacement certificate online usually in about a week. Compare that to the eight weeks or so it took under the old manual system, Lash notes. Getting a complete copy of an aircraft record on CD takes about a week for the general public and is provided electronically in a matter of minutes to FAA and NTSB staff. Customers have noticed. "I was almost shocked by the speed with which the request for ... the pilot certificate was processed," emailed one user. Another called the FAA's performance

Customers Rave, Registry Rules

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“nothing less than phenomenal” for issuing two certificates within a week of the initial request. Kudos included a slew of “outstandings” and “excellents” as well.

The system also provides the letter that grants temporary authority to use certificates in about five minutes via email or automated fax. In the past, a pilot would have to call the FAA for temporary authorization and then wait for a faxed letter from the agency.

The automated system also helps airmen more easily update their addresses, a problem that has plagued FAA record keepers in the past. More than half of the 55,000 address changes in the first half of the fiscal year were completed on-line. That eliminates a lot of paperwork for agency employees.

In all cases, the system automatically runs checks against the registry’s historical information. If something doesn’t match up, the request will be rejected.

“One of my biggest challenges was to help other parts of the FAA and industry understand what the registry does,” said Lash. It seems word has gotten out.

Now, inquiries come not just from pilots and mechanics, but also from FAA lines of business, the National Transportation Safety Board and law enforcement agencies. “With all the data we gather regarding aircraft registration and airmen certification, we’re very much involved in working with security,” said Lash. The database can help FAA officials enforce safety, such as tracking activity among designated pilot examiners. Because the aircraft database’s information is public, businesses can use it for marketing leads and state taxation boards can glean personal property information from it.

The success of the system has produced a steady rise in the number of inquiries and requests filed with the registry. “We can’t stop the workload,” Lash said. “So we’ve got to have efficiencies because staffing levels aren’t going up.” ➔



In these three “jukeboxes” are stored roughly 50 million digital images of all aircraft records held by the Civil Aviation Registry.

Learning From Experience

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**Aviation Safety Inspector
Allan Martens with the
kit he uses at the scene of
accidents.**

“Aircraft down.” The notification call, which comes after every U.S. aviation accident, is to the point.

Aviation Safety Inspector Allan Martens was home when the call came late on the evening of Oct. 14, 2004, from the Central Region Operations Center. A Pinnacle Airlines Bombardier on a ferry flight had crashed in a residential area in Jefferson City, Mo., killing two people.

That call would be the first of many for Martens, who was working a one-week rotation as the Kansas City Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) representative. The inspector on call responds to accidents in the FSDO’s area.

Learning From Experience

The next two calls were with Washington Headquarters to let Martens know when the “Go Team,” which included FAA Investigator T.R. Proven, would be heading to Missouri. Next, Martens called FSDO Manager Rich Carlson, who told Martens to take inspectors Pete Buckler and Arnold Spinelli to the site.

“It was about 1:00 a.m. when we got on the road after collecting the G-car and the accident kit from the FSDO.” The kit includes a toolbox, cameras, protective gear, and the toxicology box (“tox box”) to store samples that will be analyzed at the FAA’s Bioaeronautical Sciences Research Laboratory in Oklahoma City.

After arriving around 4:00 a.m., Martens, as the lead FAA person on the scene, took over investigative responsibility for the crash site from local law enforcement and fire department.

“The first thing I do is walk the perimeter. I want to make sure the crime scene tape encompasses everything we want. In this case there was tree breakage and homes hit, so I expanded the perimeter.”

Next, Martens coordinated with local law enforcement and sent some residents to hotels — their homes were now part of the investigation site.

“After the site is secured, we look at the aircraft.” Martens tasked Spinelli and Buckler to find the cockpit voice recorder and the flight data recorder. They found the recorders and carefully removed them from the tail section. Martens dispatched Buckler to the airport



“The first thing I do is walk the perimeter. I want to make sure the crime scene tape encompasses everything we want.”

Learning From Experience

to meet the Go Team and return the recorders to Washington for NTSB analysis. Spinelli took photographs of the wreckage for later review.

With the arrival of the Go Team, Martens briefed the team and handed over responsibility to the NTSB investigator in charge. Spinelli stayed on as part of the NTSB's powerplant team.

Fast forward to Oct. 19. Martens is still on call. The phone rings. A Corporate Airlines' Jetstream has crashed near Kirksville, Mo., with 13 fatalities and two survivors. It's highly unusual for an inspector on call to respond to two accidents in the same shift.

Martens and safety inspectors Sal Botta and Jesse Pruneda drive 182 miles to arrive on scene at 3:30 a.m. They're joined the next day by inspectors Bob Arnsperger and Val Ziedins. Harvey Haynes provides assistance from the St. Louis FSDO as the Jetstream 31/S31 type-rated resource. Haynes knows this aircraft. In a previous job, he had flown that very airplane.

Martens and his team get to work — just as before. Hours later Martens and some colleagues head home. They now have experience investigating a Part 121 accident, and even more experience being the first FAA representatives on the scene. Martens's conclusion: "The training I received is helpful, but some of it you'll never be trained for." ➔

Focus FAA wants to hear from you.

Did we mess up somewhere? Did you enjoy a story? Do you have a bone to pick? Do you have suggestions for improving the publication? Are there issues we aren't covering?

Well, that's what this column is for. Drop us an email at jim.tise@faa.gov and give us your two (or three or ten) cents worth. Please note: Stories might be edited for space considerations and style, and all emails will be considered for publication unless otherwise specified.

Following is an example of the kind of feedback we'd like to see. Bill Moriarty, an operations supervisor at the Bangor Automated Flight Service Station (FSS), wrote Greg Martin, assistant administrator for communications, taking issue with some quotes by Martin in a recent issue of Government Executive magazine ([click here to view the story](#)).

Moriarty has been a Flight Service controller and supervisor for a total of 22 years.

Jim Tise, Focus FAA Editor

Dear Editor:

I found Greg Martin's recent remarks to Government Executive concerning the duties of a Flight Service Station Air Traffic Controller most alarming and ill informed. I don't know who provides him with information, but I assure you the Flight Service Station system does far more than "...help(ing) file flight plans and providing weather briefings...."

During the preparation for the A-76 competition the Performance Work Statement team identified over 2,000 separate safety of flight and national security functions performed by the FSS ATC's in today's AFSS system. Most of our tasks go far beyond simple flight planning and weather briefings. In fact, flight planning and weather briefings account for about 15 percent or less of these 2,000 duties.

I believe it is because that so few outside the flight service stations truly understand the range of services that we provide, and the absolute necessity of those services to our customers, that we are such an undervalued and misunderstood part of the agency.

That is not to say the current FSS system doesn't need some help, because it does. Shamefully, for years it has been left to languish in the shadow in the larger, considerably more expensive programs.

We are the face of the FAA. We are the focal point, the first point of contact pilots from all segments of the aviation industry have with the ATC system. The reality is, we're someone to make an honest assessment that Flight Service actually gives the best bang-for-the-buck that the agency has.

I would encourage Mr. Martin to talk to someone who works every day in the Flight Service Station about what it is we do, and have been doing since the 1920's. Without doing so he merely perpetuates the myth that all we do is flight plans and weather briefings for general aviation.

Sincerely,

Bill Moriarty

This Guy You Want in a Crisis

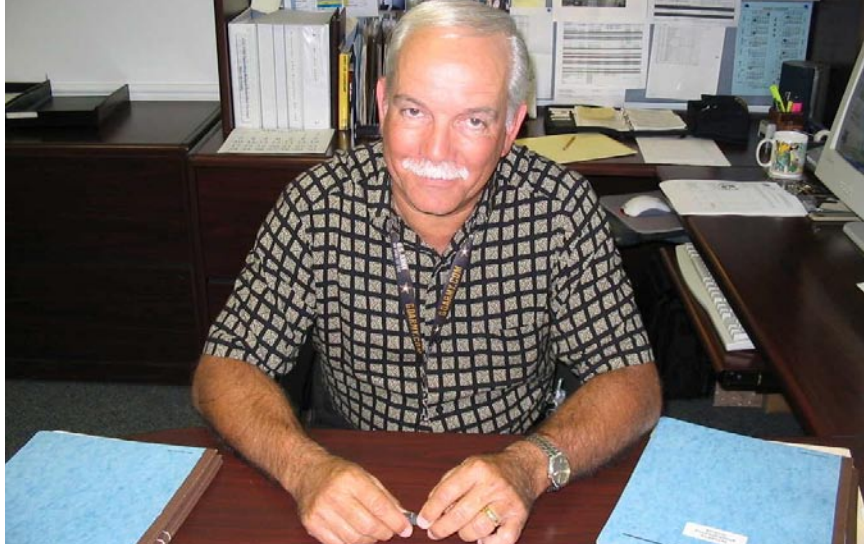
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Sometimes it seems disaster follows Hector Ramirez around. But you couldn't ask for a better guy to deal with its fallout.

Hector, an acting manager at the Tampa Systems Management Office in Florida, is responsible for maintenance and certification of all navigational equipment and radar. He supervises a team of 211 employees and 15 managers. That might sound like pretty big operation, but he has to deal with some pretty big calamities and he can use all the help he can get.

During the recent Florida hurricanes his office set up an emergency operations center. "Once the power and voltage was killed to protect the facilities, and we finished assessing that our employees were safe, the coordination to restore sites got underway." When operations go to "Charlie," we put in a lot of long hours. It's important to get the facilities back on the air - you don't want radar running in such strong winds, so you set the radar to free spin."

Hector has had a lot of experience in emergency situations. He was in Washington at Headquarters during September 11th and was integral in keeping the hotline open and providing



the field with minute-by-minute assessments.

It's not that he's looking for trouble, but Hector has a strong sense of duty, both to FAA and the United States.

"There is probably only one more thing that I would like to do for the FAA and that is to go to Iraq," he said. "We are doing great things over there, but we can still do more. My son is a Tanker in the U.S. Army with the 1st Infantry Division in Iraq - and he is doing fine. We worry about him, but he is serving his country and so am I, so we both have a vital mission."

"Working for the FAA is more than a job - it's a way of life," Hector continues.

"The FAA is like a small community that you can really feel a part of. I came from a poor family and when I arrived at the FAA, I recognized that this was an organization that offered opportunities for those that were willing to work hard and apply themselves. I took full advantage of this!" ➔



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